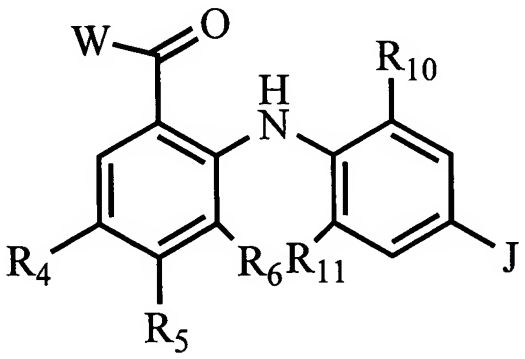
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-58. (canceled).

59. (currently amended) A method for treating neuropathic ~~chronic~~ pain, said method comprising administering to a mammal ~~subject~~ in need of such treatment a composition comprising a MEK inhibitor selected from a compound of formula (I)B:



(I)B

wherein

W is OR_1, NR_2OR_1, NR_AR_B, $NR_2NR_AR_B$, $O(CH_2)_{1-4}NR_AR_B$, or $NR_2(CH_2)_{1-4}NR_AR_B$; $O(CH_2)_{1-4}OR_1$, or $NR_2(CH_2)_{1-4}OR_1$;

R_1 is H, C_{1-8} alkyl, C_{3-8} alkenyl, C_{3-8} alkynyl, C_{3-8} cycloalkyl, phenyl, (phenyl)C_{1-4} alkyl, (phenyl)C_{3-4} alkenyl, (phenyl)C_{3-4} alkynyl, (C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)-C_{1-4} alkyl, (C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)C_{3-4} alkenyl, (C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)C_{3-4} alkynyl, C_{3-8} heterocyclic radical, (C_{3-8} heterocyclic radical)C_{1-4} alkyl, (C_{3-8} heterocyclic radical)C_{3-4} alkenyl, or (C_{3-8} heterocyclic radical)C_{3-4} alkynyl;

each of R_2 and R_3 is independently H, phenyl, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{3-8} alkynyl, C_{3-8} cycloalkyl, or (C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)C_{1-4} alkyl;

each of R_4, R_5 and R_6 is independently H, Cl, F, or Br;

R_A is H, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{3-8} alkenyl, C_{3-8} alkynyl, C_{3-8} cycloalkyl, phenyl, (C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)C_{1-4} alkyl, (C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)C_{3-4} alkenyl, (C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)C_{3-4} alkynyl, C_{3-8} heterocyclic radical, (C_{3-8} heterocyclic radical)C_{1-4} alkyl, (aminosulfonyl)phenyl, [(aminosulfonyl)phenyl]C_{1-4} alkyl, (aminosulfonyl)C_{1-6} alkyl, (aminosulfonyl)C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, or [(aminosulfonyl)C_{3-6} cycloalkyl]C_{1-4} alkyl;

R_B is H, C_{1-8} alkyl, C_{3-8} alkenyl, C_{3-8} alkynyl, C_{3-8} cycloalkyl, or phenyl;

J is SR_C, OR_C, SO_2R_C, SOR_C, $SO_2NR_DR_E$, C_{1-8} alkyl, C_{3-8} alkenyl, C_{3-8} alkynyl, C_{3-8} cycloalkyl, C_{5-8} cycloalkenyl, phenyl, (C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)C_{1-4} alkyl,
(C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)C_{3-4} alkenyl, (C_{3-8} cycloalkyl)C_{3-4} alkynyl, C_{3-8} heterocyclic radical, (C_{3-8} heterocyclic radical)C_{1-4} alkyl, -M'E'G', (heterocyclic radical)-M'-E'-G', or (cycloalkyl)-M'-E'-G';

M' is O, SO, SO_2, NR_E, (CO)NR_E, NR_E (CO), SO_2NR_E, NR_ESO_2, or CH_2;

E' is absent (a covalent bond), $(CH_2)_{1-4}$ or $(CH_2)_m O(CH_2)_p$ where $1 \leq$ (each of m and p independently) ≤ 3 and $2 \leq (m + p) \leq 4$;

G' is OR_3, SO_2R_C, or NR_FR_G; provided that where p = 1, then G' is H;

each of R_C, R_D, R_E, R_F and R_G is independently selected from H, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{3-4} alkenyl, C_{3-4} alkynyl, C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, C_{3-6} heterocyclic radical, and phenyl; NR_FR_G and NR_DR_E can each also independently be selected from morpholinyl, pyrazinyl, piperazinyl, pyrrolidinyl, or piperadinyl;

R_{10} is H, C_{1-4} alkyl, halo, NO_2, or $SO_2NR_HR_I$; and

R_{11} is H, halo, or NO_2;

wherein each hydrocarbon radical or heterocyclic radical above is optionally substituted with between 1 and 3 substituents independently selected from halo, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, C_{2-4} alkenyl, C_{2-4} alkynyl, phenyl, hydroxy, amino, (amino)sulfonyl, and NO_2, wherein each substituent alkyl, cycloalkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl or phenyl is in turn optionally substituted with between 1 and 3 substituents independently selected from halo, C_{1-2} alkyl, hydroxy, amino, and NO_2;

<u>with the proviso that</u>
<u>when W is OH, then J cannot be Me, OMe, SMe, or SO_2Me;</u>
<u>when W is NHOH, then J cannot be Me or OEt; and</u>

when W is NR_2OR_1, wherein R_1 is H, C_{1-8} alkyl, C_{3-8} cycloalkyl, phenyl; R_2 is H, phenyl, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{3-8} cycloalkyl, then J cannot be SR_C, OR_C, SO_2R_C, SOR_C, C_{1-8} alkyl, or -M'E'G';
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or C_{1-7} ester thereof.

Claims 60-61. (canceled).

62. (currently amended) The method of claim 59~~-61~~, wherein said neuropathic pain is associated with one of the following: inflammation, postoperative pain, phantom limb pain, burn pain, gout, trigeminal neuralgia, acute herpetic and postherpetic pain, causalgia, diabetic neuropathy, plexus avulsion, neuroma, vasculitis, viral infection, crush injury, constriction injury, tissue injury, limb amputation, post-operative pain, arthritis pain, and any other nerve injury between the peripheral nervous system and the central nervous system, inclusively.

Claims 63-64. (canceled).

65. (currently amended) The method of claim 59, wherein said neuropathic ~~chronic~~ pain is associated with inflammation.

66. (currently amended) The method of claim 59, wherein said neuropathic ~~chronic~~ pain is associated with arthritis.

67. (currently amended) The method of claim 59, wherein said neuropathic ~~chronic~~ pain is associated with post-operative pain.

68. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein R_C is C_{1-2} alkyl.

69. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein W is OH.

70. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein W is NHOH.

71. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein W is NHO(cyclopropylmethyl).

72. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein R_{10} is methyl or chloro.

73. (original) A method of claim 59, where R_{11} is fluoro.

74. (original) A method of claim 59, where R_{11} is H.

75. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein J is trihalomethyl or methylthio.

76. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein J is 1,2,5-thiadiazol-3-yl.

77. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein J is SO_2CH_3.

78. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein J is $SOCH_3$.

79. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein J is C_{2-8} alkynyl where the triple bond is between the carbon atoms alpha and beta to the phenyl group.

80. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein R_1 has at least one hydroxy substituent.

81. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein R_1 is H, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, isobutyl, benzyl, phenethyl, allyl, C_{3-5} alkenyl, C_{3-5} alkynyl, C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, (C_{3-5} cycloalkyl)C_{1-2} alkyl, or (C_{3-5} heterocyclic radical)-C_{1-2} alkyl.

82. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein R_1 is H or (C_{3-4} cycloalkyl)-C_{1-2} alkyl.

83. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein R_2 is H, methyl, C_{3-4} alkynyl, C_{3-5} cycloalkyl, or (C_{3-5} cycloalkyl)methyl.

84. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein R_A is H, methyl, ethyl, isobutyl, hydroxyethyl, hydroxypropyl, cyclopropylmethyl, cyclobutylmethyl, C_{2-4} alkynyl, phenyl, 2-piperidin-1-yl-ethyl, 2,3-dihydroxy-propyl, 3-[4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-piperazin-1-yl]-propyl, 2-pyrrolidin-1-yl-ethyl, or 2-diethylamino-ethyl; and R_B is H; or where R_B is methyl and R_A is phenyl.

85. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein each of R_4 and R_6 is H, and R_5 is F.

86. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein each of R_4, R_5, and R_6 is F.

87. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein each of R_4 and R_5 is F

and R_6 is Br.

88. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein R_5 is F.

89. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein said MEK inhibitor has a structure selected from: 4-fluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 5-bromo-3,4-difluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 3,4-difluoro-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzoic acid; 3,4,5-trifluoro-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 3,4-difluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzoic acid; 3,4,5-trifluoro-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 4-fluoro-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 5-bromo-3,4-difluoro-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 3,4,5-trifluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 4-fluoro-2-(4-methane-sulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 5-bromo-3,4-difluoro-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 3,4-difluoro-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; 2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzoic acid; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-4-fluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 5-bromo-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-4-fluoro-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 5-bromo-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-4-fluoro-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 5-bromo-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; and N-cyclopropylmethoxy-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzamide.

90. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein said MEK inhibitor has a structure selected from: 4-fluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 5-bromo-3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 3,4-

difluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzamide; 3,4,5-trifluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; N-hydroxy-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzamide; 8: 3,4,5-trifluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 4-fluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 5-bromo-3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 3,4,5-trifluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(2-methyl-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 4-fluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 5-bromo-3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; and N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfonyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzamide.

91. (original) A method of claim 59, wherein said MEK inhibitor has a structure selected from: 3,4-difluoro-2-(4-imidazol-1-yl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-2-(4-imidazol-1-yl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-imidazol-1-yl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 3,4,5-trifluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl-phenylamino)-benzoic acid; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-2-(2-methyl-4-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 3,4,5-trifluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(2-methyl-4-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 2-[4-(4-chloro-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl)-2-methyl-phenylamino]-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzoic acid; 2-[4-(4-chloro-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl)-2-methyl-phenylamino]-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzamide; 2-[4-(4-chloro-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl)-2-methyl-phenylamino]-3,4,5-trifluoro-N-hydroxy-benzamide; 2-{4-[4-(2-dimethylamino-ethoxy)-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl]-2-methyl-phenylamino}-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzoic acid; N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-2-{2-methyl-4-[4-(2-piperidin-1-yl-ethoxy)-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl]-phenylamino}-benzamide; and 3,4,5-trifluoro-N-hydroxy-2-{2-methyl-4-[4-(2-morpholin-4-yl-ethoxy)-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl]-phenylamino}-benzamide.

92. (original) The method of claim 59, wherein said MEK inhibitor has a structure selected from: 5-bromo-2-(2-chloro-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzoic acid; 2-(2-chloro-4-methanesulfinyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzoic acid; 2-(2-chloro-4-methanesulfonyl-phenylamino)-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzoic acid; 2-(2-chloro-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzoic acid; 5-bromo-2-(2-chloro-4-methanesulfonyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzoic acid; 2-(2-Chloro-4-methanesulfonyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzoic acid; 5-bromo-2-(2-chloro-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-benzamide; 2-(2-chloro-4-methanesulfinyl-phenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-benzamide; 2-(2-chloro-4-methanesulfonyl-phenylamino)- N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-

benzamide; 2-(2-chloro-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)- N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-benzamide;
2-(2-chloro-4-methanesulfinyl-phenylamino)- N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzamide; 5-bromo-2-(2-chloro-4-methanesulfonyl-phenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-benzamide; 2-(2-chloro-4-methylsulfanyl-phenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzamide; 2-(2-chloro-4-methanesulfonyl-phenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-benzamide;
2-[2-chloro 4-(3H-imidazol-1-yl)-phenylamino]-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-benzamide; 2-(2-chloro-4-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl-phenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzamide; 2-[4-(2-chloro-4-chloro-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl)-phenylamino]-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzoic acid; 2-[2-chloro-4-(4-chloro-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl)-phenylamino]-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzamide; 2-{4-[4-(2-dimethylamino-ethoxy)-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl]-2-methyl-phenylamino}-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzoic acid; and 2-{2-chloro-4-[4-(2-piperidin-1-yl-ethoxy)-[1,2,5]thiadiazol-3-yl]-phenylamino}-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzamide.

93. (original) The method of claim 59, wherein said MEK inhibitor has a structure selected from: 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-fluoro-benzoic acid; 5-Bromo-2-(4-ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzoic acid; N-Cyclopropylmethoxy-2-(4-ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzamide; N-Cyclopropylmethoxy-2-(4-ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-Benzamide; 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-3,4,5-trifluoro-N-hydroxy-benzamide; 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzoic acid; 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzoic acid; N-Cyclopropylmethoxy-2-(4-ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzamide; 4-Fluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide; 5-Bromo-2-(4-ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-benzamide; 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzoic acid; N-Cyclopropylmethoxy-2-(4-ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-fluoro-benzamide; 5-Bromo-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-2-(4-ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzamide; 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-benzamide; 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-N-hydroxy-4-nitro-benzamide; 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-fluoro-benzoic acid; N-Cyclopropylmethoxy-2-(4-ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-fluoro-benzamide; and 4-Fluoro-N-hydroxy-2-(4-methanesulfinyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-benzamide.

94. (original) The method of claim 59, wherein said MEK inhibitor has a structure selected from: 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)-4-fluoro-benzoic acid; 5-Bromo-2-(2-chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzoic acid; 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)- N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-benzamide; 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)- N-cyclopropylmethoxy-4-nitro-benzamide; 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)- N-hydroxy-3,4,5-trifluoro- benzamide; 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-benzoic acid; 2-(4-Ethynyl-

2-chloro-phenylamino)-4-nitro-benzoic acid; 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)- N-Cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzamide; 2-(2-chloro-4-methanesulfinyl-phenylamino)- 4-fluoro-N-hydroxy-benzamide; 5-Bromo-2-(4-ethynyl-2-chloro-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-benzamide; 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)-3,4,5-trifluoro-benzoic acid; 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)- N-cyclopropylmethoxy-4-fluoro-benzamide; 5-Bromo-2-(2-chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)-N-cyclopropylmethoxy-3,4-difluoro-benzamide; 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-chloro-phenylamino)-3,4-difluoro-N-hydroxy-benzamide; 2-(4-Ethynyl-2-chloro-phenylamino)-N-hydroxy-4-nitro-benzamide; 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)-4-fluoro-benzoic acid; 2-(2-Chloro-4-ethynyl-phenylamino)- N-cyclopropylmethoxy-4-fluoro-benzamide; 2-(2-Chloro-4-methanesulfinyl-phenylamino)- 4-fluoro-N-hydroxy-benzamide; and 2-(2-chloro-4-imidazol-1-yl-phenylamino)- 3,4-Difluoro-benzoic acid.

Claims 95-123. (canceled).

124. (original) The method of claim 59, wherein said MEK inhibitor has a structure selected from: 2-(4-ethynyl-2-methyl-phenylamino)-4-fluoro-benzoic acid; and 2-(3',5'-dichloro-biphenyl-4-ylamino)-benzoic acid.

Claim 125. (canceled).